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EAST TIMOR

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EU HEADS OF MISSION TROIKA VISIT (27 - 30 JUNE 1998)

The Process of Engagement

The rapidly changing situation in East Timor, as witnessed by the EU Heads of Mission Troika, lends a new urgency and even greater importance to the Tripartite Talks under UN auspices, and to the necessity of direct contacts between the Indonesian Government and Xanana Gusmão.

The people of East Timor themselves need to be able to contribute to the dialogue concerning their future. At present they have no way of doing so apart from on the streets. This leads to frustration and is potentially dangerous. One possibility is to hold more frequent meeting of the All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue, with an expanded membership and a mandate to include debate on East Timor's political future. Xanana Gusmão has confirmed that he would support this.

Other measures also need to be taken to facilitate dialogue within East Timor itself. Attempts have been made, but so far without success. As representatives from both sides made clear to us, to be successful, international support and mediation, in conjunction with the Church, may well be necessary.

There needs to be a better understanding of the issues involved. Autonomy, for example, is not receiving a fair hearing. Discussion within the United Nations framework might seek ways of promoting this better understanding.

Possible Confidence Building Measures

Implementation of the reduction already proposed by the Indonesian government of its military presence in East Timor should be started immediately and in a visible way. In particular, withdrawal of Kopassus (Special Forces) troops should be a top priority. This should be accompanied by the disbandment and disarmament of local paramilitary organisations.

Steps have been taken recently to make the military more accountable for actions which contravene human rights. This should now become normal procedure.

Investigations into incidents that result in deaths should, where possible, be undertaken jointly with an impartial body such as the Church or the Justice and Peace Commission, and their conclusions published quickly.

There should be a declaration of a cease-fire by Falintil, with a simultaneous corresponding action by Indonesian military forces. The military campaign would than be seen to be at an end.

There should be further releases of political prisoners. Xanana Gusmão should also be released.

Many interlocutors suggested that Portugal should now deepen its involvement in the process, in particular by opening an Interests Section in Jakarta, as proposed by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Marker. This has the support of Xanana Gusmão. The restoration of visa rights between Indonesia and Portugal, and the exchange of high-level visits, would also be welcomed.

The full implementation of the recommendations in the 1998 UN Commission on Human Rights Chairman's Statement on East Timor would be a significant contribution to the restoration of confidence.

International Involvement

On the basis of our findings, we believe that, in addition to its present involvement, the international community may soon be required to assist with the process of political change, the facilitation of dialogue and the maintenance at stability in East Timor.

Final Assessment

It is our impression that there will be no lasting solution in East Timor without a firm commitment to some form of direct consultation, at some stage in the future, of the will of the people there. Such consultation could be on the issue of independence, or on the basis of a negotiated settlement, or via a genuinely representative electoral process. And there is an urgent need to promote immediate dialogue involving East Timorese leaders, for flexibility from all sides in the negotiations, and for the implementation of confidence-building measures.

EAST TIMOR - DRAFT GAC CONCLUSIONS (13.07.98)

The Council heard a report on the Troika mission to East Timor from 26 - 30 June. It paid tribute to the way the members of the troika handled the difficult situation which arose and agreed that their report and conclusions should continue to be followed up by the competent Council bodies.

The Council considers that a new opportunity exists to find a realistic and fair solution to the problem of East Timor, which will respect the rights and legitimate aspirations of its people, in accordance with international norms and principles. This lends a new urgency to the talks under the auspices of the UN Secretary General, to which the EU reiterates its firm support.

The Council considers that early dialogue involving the East Timorese leaders is imperative, that confidence-building measures should immediately be pursued and that there must be appropriate consultation of the East Timorese people in due course.